

DRAFT Rapid Transit Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

EOB Auditorium

March 25, 2015 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Voting Members In-Attendance

Sean Egan; Andrew Gunning; David Hauck; Jonathan Parker; Dan Wilhelm; Mark Winston.

Non-Voting Members

Tom Autrey; Carolyn Biggins; Joana Conklin; Gary Erenrich; Edgar Gonzalez; Rick Kiegel; Stacy Leach; Ligia Moss; Tom Pogue; Frank Spielberg; Emil Wolanin.

Other Attendees

Nancy Abeles; Jamaica Arnold; Chris Bell; Andrew Bing; Kelly Blynn; Jerry Garson; Celesta Jurkovich; Karen Kahl; Kyle Kramer; Kyle Nembhard; Rafael Olarte; Harriet Quinn; Geri Rosenberg.

Introductions and Welcome

Emil Wolanin started the meeting at 4:08 pm. Mr. Wolanin is chairing the meeting in Al Roshdiah's absence. The Directors are currently at a Senior Manager Retreat with the County Executive. The meeting began with all attendees introducing themselves.

Approval of Minutes for January 28, 2015.

The minutes were approved without changes.

Montgomery County Transportation Priorities Letter

The 2015 Joint Letter is from the County Executive and the County Council and notifies the State of the County's transportation priorities. A copy of the letter can be found on the County's RTS website. A letter is sent to the State each year if there are changes. Edgar Gonzalez explained the purpose of the letter and how the State releases funds based on the listed priorities. While there are 16 priorities under the Construction Program and another ten under the D&E Program, realistically, only the first couple will probably be funded, according to Mr. Gonzalez.

Updates on Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT)

Rick Kiegel introduced his CCT Team. Rick then presented a brief overview of the CCT schedule, with construction to begin in the Spring of 2018 and service to begin in 2021. At this time, the CCT is on schedule, but there is currently no funding in the six year plan for construction. The CCT is 16 miles long, and broken up into two phases. Phase One is from Metropolitan Grove to the Shady Grove Metrorail station (nine miles) and Phase Two is from the COMSAT facility in Clarksburg to Metropolitan Grove (seven miles).

Alignment/Station Location

Karen Kahl, Engineering Manager from RK&K, led this part of the discussion. As noted above, Phase One is nine miles with a dedicated right-of-way. Ms. Kahl's presentation showed the different sections of the CCT as it runs alongside SHA and Montgomery County roadways. Ms. Kahl also explained the different locations of the stations. One station will tie-in with the MARC station (Metropolitan Grove). There will be two stations on Quince Orchard road – one of which will run onto NIST property. The Kentlands will have the only aerial station. The CCT will also run clockwise around the Universities at Shady Grove. This section will have one bus every 15 minutes break off from the main CCT line to run the loop serving the campus. As part of Ms. Kahl's presentation, she gave some examples of how the lanes would look.

Q) Phase 2 – why the convoluted route?

A) The State is not working on Phase 2 at this time. If there are conflicts, they will address them during the course of the planning study.

Q) At one time there was a study that showed 60 – 70% of ridership goes to the Shady Grove station to go on to DC. What is it now?

A) Don't know, the AM peak's greatest load is Rockville north. The morning peak is in the opposite direction – reverse commuting.

Q) In terms of modeling – are you finishing the last round?

A) Modeling never ends, so we are continuing that work.

Q) How many lanes?

A) All two lanes of the BRT guideway are dedicated, meaning they are solely for the use of BRT vehicles.

There was some discussion about the traffic signal priority system and how it would work where the CCT crosses other lanes of traffic. In addition to roads with traffic signals, engineers also need to take into account the residential feeder roads that have a stop sign instead of a traffic light. However, there are not very many residential cross streets; most are commercial in this area.

Station Design

Kyle Kramer is the Station Architect, and he led this section of the presentation. The platforms are 150 feet long by 18 feet wide, 60% of which will be covered. There will be boarding for two buses at the same time, with primary and secondary entrances, benches, windscreens, etc. The process began by looking at the station areas and then the specific station sites. This was a high level urban design exercise. There are six unique stations types – Median Center (5), Side-Aligned Center (4), Side (1), Aerial (1), Sidewalk (2) and Split-Side (1). The goal is to create a system-wide architectural scheme for the stations that symbolizes the premium nature of the

BRT project that the CCT is. The station design will create an image for the entire system while also establishing stations as amenities for the communities they serve. The remainder of Mr. Kramer's presentation involved showing renderings of individual stations in Phase One.

Q) Would there be any barrier that would prevent pedestrians from crossing the road?

A) There is a hard physical barrier, but it's only 2 feet high. The station designs will utilize landscaping to discourage illegal crossings and the lay out of the station will also discourage this. In addition, the engineers also had to look at what was around the station. For example, a state highway on one side would make it more important to have a solid barrier, whereas an apartment complex would want to be given easier access to the station.

Q) Is there any cold weather protection?

A) There are wind screens.

Q) Would you be using infrared heaters?

A) No. Passengers are not waiting that long. This is something that has never been deemed necessary in this part of the country.

This lead into a discussion about the merits of implementing heaters and other methods to make the stations more accommodating during the winter, even though most riders would have a 15 minute wait at the most. Members of the Task Force shared their negative experience of being in Cleveland during the winter at that city's BRT stations.

Q) So the wind screens are permeable?

A) They are glass, so they would protect waiting passengers. But in an S-shape, you are not fully enclosed.

Q) Will there be a gap along the bottom of the screens?

A) Yes, to also make it easier to clean.

Committee members noted that the Cleveland stations' windscreens did very little to change the temperature. There were gaps on the side and bottoms, and this same problem was found at all stations. The 15 degree temperatures really pointed out the disadvantages of this type of station. Gary Erenrich mentioned doing additional studies, especially on the aerial station, to see if it would be possible to correct these issues.

Q) To what extent for your design did you consider that there will be additional corridors? How do these stations potentially relate to stations on other parts of the BRT network? One Steering Committee member said he would like to see consistency between the CCT and the BRT stations. The CCT will set the standard. Are we going to maintain a theme throughout the system or will the CCT be seen as a separate entity?

A) We are working with WMATA and the MARC stations to keep some consistency. Regarding the rest of the network, there aren't currently any plans for stations, so it's hard to plan at this

point for the entire system. But it would be assumed what is developed for the CCT will become at least a general model for the rest of the BRT system in the county.

Rick Kiegel mentioned that the different stations could be used along any stations in the RTS corridors. They will need to look at the 14 inch station height, the length of stations, and the surrounding areas in order to make decisions on the type of station for each RTS corridor. The stations will need to be scalable to the area in which they reside. A big concern is keeping the station amenities, such as the canopies, the benches, wind screens, etc. the same across the network. We don't want the other corridors to be of an obviously lesser quality than the CCT. Cost would need to be taken into consideration for all design decisions.

Q) How are you going to integrate local buses coming into the stations?

A) No local buses will use the CCT stations. We are coordinating with WMATA and Ride On to minimize the distance between the other bus stops and the CCT stations.

Q) Will there be a kiss and ride?

A) Not planning to have real estate for this – mostly curb side drop-off.

Q) At Shady Grove – are all the levels at the same grade?

A) Yes.

Q) Will there be escalators for the aerial stations?

A) No, elevators.

Operations

Chris Bell, Operations Manager, made the final presentation. For operations planning to meet ridership demand, two major concerns are the required number of buses per hour and the bus fleet size. This is a two-step process. Step One involves the final policy guidelines – vehicle type, acceptable maximum passenger loads, and services utilizing the transit way (only CCT branded buses with a two route pattern – CCT Direct and CCT via USG). There are no proposed changes to Ride On, WMATA, or local shuttle networks. Some of the elements impacting the CCT are fare collection approach, transit signal priority, and vehicle configuration. Step Two involves calculating the required number of buses per hour. Ridership forecasts and maximum load of the buses will dictate the required number of buses per hour.

Q) Will bikes be accommodated on the vehicles?

A) Yes, they will be accommodated on the vehicles. But they will be loaded at the middle of the bus, rather than placed on the front of the bus, like is currently done on Ride On and WMATA buses.

Q) Platform heights – level boarding sounds great, but this could be a problem if other buses want to share the stations. This problem has come up with the Trolley line in DC.

A) The 14 inch platform would work with other buses.

Q) The issues with which vehicles are being selected, fare collection, etc. will have an effect on the rest of the networks, won't they?

A) MTA is trying to incorporate these issues based on information available currently. As RTS moves forward, we will continue to add the new requirements.

Q) Using a 30% standees guideline?

A) No, a 50% standees guideline is being used for the vehicle interior designs.

Q) If you are going to have all these buses, and you're telling me I have to wait 2 minutes to get a seat, how is this going to affect headways?

A) It shouldn't. There won't be two lines. It will be like the Metro. If you don't want to get on the packed bus, you step back. The information provided will be very important to keep the buses moving and to spread the loads.

Q) You say you are not doing a lot of changes with the local buses. You need more circulators to pick up people further away from the stations.

A) Believe that will be adjusted for as the system is completed.

Q) Is the draft environmental cost estimates report available on-line?

A) No. It is still in review. There are cost estimates, but not available right now.

This presentation can be found on the County's RTS website.

Status of BRT Studies

MD586

Jamaica Arnold showed two slides. Areas in green were already completed. There is a workshop next year to collect more information. The next steps in the study are to look at exiting conditions, the purpose and need, preliminary corridor alternative development, and ridership analysis; then we will hold another public workshop. The study will recommend alternatives to be retained for further detailed study.

MD355 & US29

These corridors are still in the beginning stages and are on a different schedule than MD586. The corridor planning studies should be wrapped up by the summer of 2016. .

Update on RTS Corridor Advisory Committees

The CAC kickoff meeting was February 28, 2015. There were about 130 attendees. This was an opportunity to review display boards and meet project teams, County and State officials and

other CAC members. Joana Conklin gave a brief overview of the meeting. Some common themes that came out of the meeting were:

- Interested in BRT's potential as more than a commuter system;
- Access to transit – don't believe people should have to walk 20 minutes to get to a station;
- Need to consider how to involve other jurisdictions since their residents will take advantage of the BRT;
- No matter what solution is chosen, bike access must be considered;
- Would Ride On service be in competition with the new BRT services;
- Are the station locations shown in the Master Plan;
- Needs to be seen as part of an integrate system;
- More discussion on the economic development impact of BRT is needed;
- What is the cost and how will it be paid for;
- How were the CACs formed;
- Do you really care about our input;
- Why are they called an advisory committee and not a decision making group.

Ms. Conklin provided dates for the next round of CAC meetings and invited the Steering Committee members and public to attend the meetings. She also explained the MD586 study is on a different track from the rest of the corridors, so they are trying to bring that CAC up to speed. That study began prior to the development and approval of the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. It was after the approval of the Master Plan that it was decided each corridor needed a CAC.

Update on the Purple Line

The MTA secretary is evaluating the project and should have a Project Evaluation Report out around May 20, 2015. This could result in a revision of the RFP, which currently has a due date of May 21st. Then there would be a three month time period for proposers to conduct value engineering work to lower costs. Proposals would then be due August 19, 2015. The evaluation of bids would be completed by September and a contract could be let by December, 2015/January, 2016. There is basically a six month delay potential.

Discussion of Future RTS Steering Committee structure, frequency and topics

Emil Wolanin started this discussion. Internal discussions of MCDOT have raised concerns about the quality of the meetings, and the department feels it might be better to have the meetings every other month instead of monthly. There has been a low response to request for agenda items. The goal is to have more discussions similar to the CCT discussion during this meeting. Dan Wilhelm suggested, due to the lack of time to discuss this topic tonight, holding it until the April meeting. Mark Winston felt this topic should get more discussion next month. It was agreed to table this topic until the next meeting.

Meeting Calendar

The next Steering Committee meeting is April 29, 2015 in the EOB 9th Floor Conference Room at 4:00 pm.